DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 653 FL 022 498

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TITLE Connections between the First and Second Language in Oral and Written Expression: Spanish-English Bilinguals in the United States.
PUB DATE May 94
NOTE 80p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingualism; *Code Switching (Language); Comparative Analysis; English (Second Language); *Interlanguage; *Language Attitudes; Language Dominance; *Oral Language; Spanish Speaking; *Transfer of Training; *Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the ways in which the background of six Spanish-English bilinguals has affected their attitudes toward the two languages and the transfer of skills between first and second languages, especially as it might relate to writing instruction. A review of literature looks at studies of linguistic and social aspects of the Hispanic culture, oral language transfer, sociolinguistic factors in language acquisition, psycholinguistic issues in second-language written expression, and syntactic and semantic problems in Spanish-English bilinguals' written expression in English. The study itself involved taped guided interviews and translation exercises with six women, aged mid-teens to mid-forties. Profiles of each are presented. Analysis focuses on the subjects' expressed cultural identity conflicts, attitudes toward language-mixing, experiences with formal education in the two languages, and semantic and syntactic dissonance in oral and written production of the two languages. Separate analyses are presented for Spanish-dominant (n=2), English-dominant (n=2), and impartial bilingual (n=2) subjects. It is concluded that (1) while subjects seemed to use one language to help make meaning in another, this was not always through genuine code-switching, and (2) attitudes toward code-switching were based largely in upbringing. Appendix A presents the interview questions in Spanish and English. Appendixes B&B present the translation exercises and Appendix D shows the conceptual framework. Contains 26 references. (MSE)

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CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE IN ORAL AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION:

SPANISH-ENGLISH BILINGUALS IN THE UNITED STATES

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May 1994

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Abstract

The growing number of Spanish-speaking peoples in the U.S. has led to the formation of a variety of bilingual communities. Because these Spanish-speakers reside in an English-speaking environment, they are compelled to learn the dominant language, English. However, instead of abandoning their first language, Spanish, they are able to preserve it by interacting with family members and other bilinguals in their communities. Yet, because their acquisition of English depends on their social orientation towards this second language, the maintenance of their first language is manifested in different forms. Indeed, while some bilinguals feel comfortable mixing the two languages, often intrasententially, others insist on always separating their Spanish from their English. Since these decisions depend predominantly on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is important to look at how these bilinguals' relationship towards both Spanish and English has developed. They are juggling not only two languages but also two systems of thought and culture. This overlapping of the two systems can often create anxiety and apprehension especially during the writing process. To understand the complexity of the transfer process, studies need to show how the backgrounds of Spanish-English bilinguals have affected their attitudes towards their two languages and what social implications they see as influencing these attitudes.

This study draws a portrait of six Spanish-English bilinguals whose relationship with Spanish and English has depended not only on age and number of years of residence in the U.S., but more importantly on their experience with and attitudes towards the two languages. These bilinguals could not be viewed as a singular group since they represented not only a variety of cultural backgrounds but also a rich array of linguistic communities. Through an analysis of attitudinal development, cultural identity conflicts, educational background, and language transfer problems, this study reveals the complex dimensions of the bilingual individual, a reality that needs to be recognized when these members are met in the writing classroom.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and my sister, Sarah, for all of their love and constant support, the six women who so enthusiastically agreed to be a part of this study, my professors, Deborah Swanson, Jo Keroes, and Catharine Lucas, for supporting my interest in Spanish-English bilingualism, my roommate, Ariela, for putting up with me the past two years of graduate school and first-time teaching, my best friend, Nova, for long phone conversations, my friend and colleague, Candi, for her professional guidance in this project, my friends in Spain for inspiring me to do this study, and lastly all of my friends who share my passion for the Spanish language and the many cultures it represents.

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Statement of the Problem

I have often considered myself a member of two different fields: English composition and Spanish language. As I studied these two areas in college, I was rarely able to make any sort of connection between them. I had decided to become an English major because I felt most comfortable with writing and knew since I was a child that the writing process itself had always been a pleasurable one for me. My interest in the Spanish language, however, was a little less obvious to me. In high school I was exposed to my first formal foreign language class - French. I remember that even though the words sounded strange to me, I was determined to understand what they meant and how I could use them to communicate ideas.

Certain aspects of French class reminded me of language experiences I had had as a child when I felt frustrated and unable to express myself properly. I remembered one particular experience quite vividly. When I was four years old, my family lived in Tunisia for one year where the predominant spoken language is French. According to my mother, I had started speaking English late and apparently became extremely frustrated when all of the people I was surrounded by were suddenly speaking to me only in French. Even though this exposure to a second language was not regular enough to have a significant impact on my oral performance of English, I do think it caused me to become aware of the existence of other modes of communication. I must have subconsciously realized that any person who walked up to me in the marketplace in Carthage and started asking me questions was not going to be speaking to me in my mother's language. I began to relate the people with whom I interacted to a spoken language. My family, I knew, was always going to speak to me in English, but everyone else was going to attempt to engage me in another mode of discourse, one that at the time I was not ready for.

A similar phenomenon occurred when I was attending grammar school here in San Francisco. About seventy-five percent

of my second-grade class was Hispanic and the majority of them were Spanish-English bilingual speakers. They spoke Spanish at home to their parents and English to their teacher and most of their classmates at school. However, those students who also happened to speak Spanish at home posed another option to these bilinguals. Instead of speaking English to them, they often spoke a mixture of English and Spanish. When they wanted to make certain that the monolingual speakers of English, like myself, did not understand what they were saying, they would be sure to speak only in Spanish. I remember feeling very frustrated and excluded by this new mode of communication they had created. They had this special language that I could only catch designated parts of. I knew that no matter how hard I tried to listen, I would never be a part of their secret communication.

Yet, when I got to high school, the new class composition was so drastically different that I quickly lost that sense of inadequacy. There were no longer these subsets of foreign language speakers. Most of us were monolingual/monocultural Americans. It was only in French class now that I gave any thought to another mode of communication. My experience with the frustration of not feeling competent in a second language did not happen so much in the classroom this time nor in the surrounding environment. Instead, it occurred on two occasions when I was in a country where another language was spoken. Like a sudden reminder of my past frustrations, I found myself experiencing the same moments of anxiety as I did when I was a child of four as I painfully tried to express my needs to a French family I was staying with for two weeks on a student exchange program. I was fifteen and I was overwhelmed with my sense of helplessness. This feeling was heightened once again when I was seventeen on a trip to Spain I took with my own family. Having no knowledge of Spanish at the time, I tried unsuccessfully to communicate in my book-learned French, thinking that a any Romance language would do for communicative purposes. It did not work, and I remember sitting on a bench looking out at the Mediterranean Sea, determined to learn how to communicate in a language other than my own.

This final experience in Spain was what prompted me to learn Spanish in college. The vocabulary and structures came easily to me because of my high school background in French. My goal in college seemed to center on my desire to return to Spain and to finally communicate with the people whom I had previously looked at blankly, trying desperately to decipher their words. I lived with two Spaniards in Madrid with the hope that by living with native speakers, I would be able to assimilate more naturally into the culture and acquire the language at a faster pace. Much to my disappointment, I found that after the first two months, I had barely the vocabulary to express more than my utter necessities. In addition, the Spanish culture seemed much more different than I had expected. I could not accustom myself to the eating hours, the relaxed attitudes, and the close-knit communities. I was so frustrated that I could not say all that I wanted to say and often felt that even when I did express my ideas, the meaning I was trying to convey did not quite come across.

It was not until my return to Spain this summer, after having taught a year of high school Spanish, that I really felt that I was able to communicate effectively. The Spanish culture was no longer a shock to me. I was able to anticipate how a conversation would proceed and how best to articulate an idea according to a particular context. My vocabulary was much richer and I felt more confident about expressing myself. It was such an exciting feeling to be able to draw from two separate languages and try to figure out how to express an idea that I had had originially in English that might not mean the same when I expressed it in Spanish. How could I convey the same meaning?

This question is at the heart of my research in this project; I want to look at Spanish-English bilingual speakers and try to determine what semantic problems they encounter when trying to convey certain meanings that work in one language and not the other. In speech, this problem is sometimes easier to work around; however, writing presents other communication problems. There is no interlocutor, only a reader who is distanced from the writer. What problems do bilingual Spanish-English speakers encounter,

particularly in the academic setting, when they attempt to convey certain ideas in English that originated in Spanish? What types of syntactic problems interfere with their expression of these ideas? Even though I have experienced only the Spanish culture firsthand, I hope that my experience with the Spanish language will enable me to recognize certain linguistic patterns and semantic implications that cross most Spanish-speaking communities. The United States is unique in that it has bilingual communities where Spanish and English are both spoken. It is this community of people that I wish to explore.

Review of Relevant Literature

The Bilingual Community: Linguistic and Social Aspects of the Hispanic Culture

Speakers who are able to manipulate two languages to serve their particular purposes are true bilinguals. Of the Hispanic population in the United States, the people who claim membership to a bilingual community are those who have become a part of a heterogenous society that regards both Spanish and English or a mix of the two as acceptable modes of communication. Often these bilinguals learned to speak Spanish at home with their parents and extended family either here in the United States or in their country of origin and were then taught English in school. Even though these bilinguals can claim linguistic membership in either the Spanish-speaking or English-speaking group, their cultural differences are not as easily divided. Indeed, they have become a part of a new cultural community - a mixture of the Hispanic and American cultures that have been forced to coexist and mix.

Because bilinguals feel a tension between their two cultures, it is sometimes difficult for them to keep their two languages separate. When they decide to mix the two languages, they engage in what is termed code-switching. Bilinguals will often use code-switching in order to identify themselves as belonging to a specific linguistic community (Pfaff, 1979). Yet, what is most significant about bilinguals' decision to code-switch is that they are not only creating another mode of communication, but they are also determining what ideas or words cannot be expressed properly in the other language. Therefore, bilingualism is not just a matter of balancing linguistic skills; it is also an ability to know what the social and cultural implications of it are in the society in which both languages are spoken (Siguán & Mackey, 1987).

Currently, there is a struggle in the U.S. Hispanic community to maintain the Spanish language in the face of their obvious need to acquire the English language. There are many reasons behind their abandoning their native language. For example, in the Chicano

(Mexican-American) community, those who have most recently come from Mexico and speak only Spanish are immediately positioned at a much lower socio-economic status because they cannot yet speak English (Sanchez, 1982). Once they have been able to obtain a working knowledge of English, they leave the "barrio" for higher-paying jobs that often prevent them from any regular contact with the Spanish-speaking community (Sanchez, 1982). As a result, these bilinguals lose contact with their first language in an attempt to gain greater status in their new culture.

The use of the Spanish language in Hispanic communities has different implications for its bilingual members. For example, in the Chicano community, the attitudes toward Spanish can range from a rejection of the language because of the subordinate connotations it can have to a genuine defense of the language because it represents cultural resistance (Sanchez, 1982). Sanchez states that because of the varying economic status of members of the Hispanic community, maintenance of the Spanish language depends on the objectives of the speakers who use it. On the one hand, bilingual speakers will sometimes deny that they speak Spanish in order to improve their relations with Anglos (Barker, 1975). They are aware that their social status might be judged by the language they use. On the other hand, some bilinguals view the maintenance of the Spanish language as a reinforcement of their culture and a tie to their country of origin. Even with the negative stigma attached to the Spanish language, the growing number of Spanish speakers in the U.S. is requiring more people in power to speak Spanish. As a result, some bilinguals are discovering that their knowledge of Spanish can sometimes help them obtain employment, particularly when translation skills are required (Sanchez, 1982).

Most bilinguals in the United States regard Spanish as the more informal language (Oliver, 1975). It is the language spoken in the home or the one used to create intimacy between other members of the Hispanic community (Sanchez, 1983; Barker, 1975). Because Spanish carries this implication of intimacy, members are conscious as to whom they use it with. Barker (1975) claims that the bilingual community is unique in that even though

the children speak Spanish at home, they are not taught formal Spanish in school. Instead, they learn English in school and learn to associate this second language with formal situations and relationships. He notes that exceptions to this, in the Mexican community in particular, are religious or patriotic holidays that are usually conducted in formal Spanish. Also, because Spanish is used primarily for oral communication as opposed to written (Peck, 1991), many bilinguals are more self-conscious about their formal proficiency in Spanish. Since most have not received formal instruction in the Spanish language, they are likely to use Spanish only when speaking to those they feel most comfortable with. However, for communicative purposes, the bilingual is able to express himself successfully in both languages.

Yet, generalizing the attitudes towards language is impossible when one considers the various backgrounds of the Spanish-English bilingual. As Valdés (1991) points out, the many complexitites of bilingualism become evident as the bilingual individual is studied. She argues that it is difficult to place bilinguals into categories without taking into account their relationship to and experience with both languages from a very early stage. She also stresses the fact that most research in the past has addressed either mainstream basic writers or ESL writers. She claims that there has been little done in the way of identifying the problems "fluent/functional" bilinguals have when approaching writing tasks in English. She says that "even bilinguals who are native-like in their fluency may be most unnative-like in their selection and in their use of conventionalized language. Problems of selection or idiomaticity are particularly salient in written language" (p. 17). She classifies these problems as "fossils" of the first language which are indeed the most difficult to eradicate even after years of exposure to the second language.

In her discussion, Valdés breaks down the category of "bilingualism" by differentiating between "elective bilingualism" (characterized by bilinguals who have chosen to learn another language and have created the conditions (e.g. have moved to the country where the language is spoken) in order to attain fluency)

and "circumstantial bilingualism" (characterized by bilinguals who have had to move from their country of origin because of societal conflict or other turmoil and have had to learn the language of their new country in order to survive). She denotes how these categories can be further broken down into "incipient" or "functional" bilingualism. These categories are crucial in determining how a bilingual will function in her second culture. While an incipient bilingual can be identified by her non-native-like speech, a functional bilingual can appear fluent yet still possess non-native signs. These signs that are most often evident in writing are caused either by the "fossilized" elements of her first language or by the influence of a contact variety of English, an "imperfect" form of English that contains non-native-like features but over time has become part of the language spoken in bilingual communities (e.g. the Chicano community).

Another phenomenon that occurs among some functional bilinguals is their choice to mix languages when speaking to another bilingual. By mixing the two languages, the speakers are able to create their own mode of speaking. It has been studied that Chicano adolescents often use code-switching to identify themselves as belonging to a specific linguistic community (Pfaff, 1979). Poplack (1980) argues that the decision to code-switch is not so much dependent on *when* it occurs but *why* the participants choose it as a mode of discourse. By engaging in a mode of speaking that combines their knowledge of the two languages, they are, in effect, creating their own discourse community. Because they are fluent in both languages, they do not feel restricted by the possibility of miscommunication due to a lack of knowledge; rather, their communication depends primarily on their word choice that they base on situational factors. For example, Sanchez (1983) describes a situation where two Chicana women who are college friends feel comfortable enough with one another that they easily switch back and forth between the two languages. This switching is often intrasentential (occurring within the same sentence) and is provoked not only by the syntactical structure of the two languages but also by the semantic meaning each switch conveys. Sometimes a

word or phrase that has particular cultural implications will set off the switch in either language. Yet, as arbitrary as the code-switching seems, bilingual speakers are actually unconsciously aware of the grammatical constraints they must adhere to when engaging in this language mode (Aguirre, 1978). What is most striking about what bilinguals can do with both languages at this point is "combine two linguistic repertoires within one and the same communicative act" (Py, 1992, p. 171). This phenomenon is what makes them such a unique linguistic community.

However, because language-mixing is a form of communication that is neither Spanish nor English, some linguistic communities view this mode of communication as impure (Kirschner and Stephens, 1987). It is important to see how this sociopolitical factor affects the Spanish-English bilingual's attitude towards her bilingualism and how the stigma attached to language-mixing affects her. In a study that was conducted by Kirschner and Stephens (1987) of Spanish-English bilinguals and English-speaking L2 students of Spanish, students were asked to complete a questionnaire that addressed issues such as their confidence in both languages, appropriateness of language choice, acceptability of language use, and prestige of the variety of Spanish spoken. As the students responded to the questions, many became aware of the distinction between language skill ability and linguistic competence (the latter indicating true bilingualism). Students who claimed to code-switch or who spoke a dialectal version of Spanish (e.g. Caribbean Spanish and Ecuadorian Spanish) expressed greater anxiety about their socio-political status, indicating that they felt they had lower status because of the type of Spanish they spoke. Kirschner and Stephens contend that in order to alter society's negative attitude towards code-switching and other "vernacular" forms of the Spanish language mentioned by the students in the study, more formal studies of bilingualism need to be conducted.

Language Transfer in the Oral Expression of Bilingual Speakers

Members of the bilingual community who are still in the process of acquiring English will often partake in an "interlanguage system which is neither based entirely on his or her first language (L1) nor based completely on the target language" (Seliger, 1988, p. 19). They learn the second language (L2) initially by applying what they know about their first language. Yet, Seliger states that this acquisition process, however unconscious, requires a high level of decision-making on the part of the learner. Not only will the sophisticated learner apply what he already knows about the grammatical structure of the second language, but he will also try to match the meaning of the first language as closely as possible to the second. The problem that arises, Seliger notes, when second language learners attempt to do this consistently is that they sometimes overextend the grammatical rules which may be inappropriate in certain circumstances, often inadvertently altering the meaning of their original idea. They have tried to combine their knowledge of syntax and semantics to express an idea when they have not quite mastered all of the exceptions of the second language.

Essentially, these learners are engaging in what has been termed "language transfer." Contrary to former belief that viewed L1 and L2 as developing in only one direction instead of complementing one another, new studies have shown that language transfer is actually a "learning strategy" for those who are acquiring a second language (Zhang, 1990). In a study on a class of Spanish-speaking ESL learners, Zhang had his students answer a series of sixteen questions, stated both in Spanish and English but that required them to respond only in English. Through a close examination of the students' written responses, he hoped to determine what types of transfer needed to occur as they answered the questions. He wanted to show that these learners draw on their general linguistic knowledge (from either one or more languages) and are able to test what they already know to the language they are trying to acquire. He quotes Brown (1987) saying that "the

interaction of previously learned material with a present learning event" is a major part in language transfer. The speaker's subconscious recognition of "the structural differences and correspondences that exist between L1 and L2" are inherent in the transfer process (Kohn, 1986, p. 21). This idea, Zhang states, makes the language transfer phenomenon seem much more positive. In other words, the L1 can act as a knowledge base from which the student can experiment with what she already knows. (The specific syntactic problems these students faced will be discussed in a later section.) Language transfer depends on many factors, a crucial one being that SL (second language) speakers are also trying to maneuver the social mores of a culture in addition to manipulating the language of that culture. What Zhang's study lacked was direct student oral interpretations of their responses that could have been obtained during interview sessions. This information might have led to more conclusive data indicating the reasons behind some of the syntactic problems that occurred. By analyzing just the texts themselves, he was unable to get a genuine sense of the confusion and/or apprehension these students might have felt during the process.

Sociolinguistic Factors That Affect Language Acquisition

Seliger (1988) describes Chomsky's theory of "universal grammar" by stating the idea that there are some grammatical rules that all languages share, therefore second language learners can draw on this knowledge and apply it to the new language. Yet, even if they are able to determine these correlations between their first and second languages, it is only the true bilingual speaker who is able to recognize appropriate syntactical parameters within a cultural context. The bilingual has had to learn not only the appropriate linguistic habits needed to function within the second language group but also the cultural habits of this group (Stauble, 1980). This means that he has had to consciously accept the fact that his system of communication is not just linguistically different from the one he is trying to acquire but it also has certain cultural

implications that might be difficult to convey in the second language.

In language acquisition studies (e.g., Zamel, 1983; Seliger, 1988; McGroarty, 1991; Ray, 1993), it has been discovered that the social orientation of the learner towards his second language has a significant bearing on his acquisition of the language. Seliger states that "since language is used in social exchanges, the feelings, attitudes, and motivations of learners in relation to the target language itself, to the speakers of the language, and to the culture will affect how learners respond to the input to which they are exposed" (Seliger, p. 29). In other words, if a speaker feels comfortable in his new environment, he is more likely to acquire the language at a faster rate than a speaker who feels self-conscious and detached from the culture. Seliger further explains how a speaker's feeling of displacement in a new culture will automatically inhibit more spontaneous second language production. However, if the SL speaker begins to feel more at ease with the interlocutor, he will then feel more comfortable with the new language, providing him with more practice with the language and more opportunity for correction.

Most bilinguals experience this comfort level when speaking with one another which allows them to code-switch between the two languages according to their needs (Seliger, 1988). If they are true bilinguals, this switching will only occur according to semantic variance, not syntactic necessity. When they sense that the interlocutor is not a bilingual, they will automatically switch to L1 or L2. Like other bilinguals, the Spanish/English speaker has been able to not only assimilate to two separate cultures (the Hispanic and the American) but has also been able to form a part of a new bilingual culture that requires him to mix the two. The language then becomes not only a "means of communication but also the vehicle of a culture" (Siguán & Mackey, 1987, p. 37). Thus, code-switching becomes a language mode through which bilinguals can convey certain meanings. As Galvan (1986) states in his account of bilingual/bicultural Hispanics' writing process, the creation of a single phrase can be regarded as an attempt to communicate a

certain cultural meaning. These small units of speech represent larger meanings which can only be understood by members of the same culture. When they find bilinguals are unable to express these meaning, they must switch to the language that will be most understood by the other speaker.

Another sociolinguistic factor that arises among Hispanic bilingual members, particularly in their learning strategies in the classroom, is their tendency to use oral communication when problem-solving. In Ray's study of Latino students at Wayne State University in Detroit (1993), students were asked to read a given text and then use what they read to support their ideas in a formal writing assignment for a basic writing class. Yet, what she found with these students, the majority of whom were second generation Mexican Americans who spoke Spanish as a first language, was that they tended to expand on their own personal experiences from the text without making any specific references at all to the text itself. They were not at all preoccupied with what the task itself demanded of them. They used the social interaction to develop their own ideas without concentrating specifically on the text. "The text was not a particularly important aspect of their meaning-making; instead, they saw the reading-to-write task as essentially a brain-storming technique - something to jar their memories and elicit an opinion" (Basham, Ray & Whalley, 1993, p. 310). Contrary to other students, like the Asians in this study who oriented themselves more towards the text and the task, the Latinos were more focused on the topic itself, relying heavily on direct interaction with other students for their comprehension of the assignment, rarely quoting or paraphrasing from the text itself. Ray's study (1993) shows that not only is peer interaction and oral communication important among Hispanic students, but their connection to the topic itself is also a factor in their comprehension of an idea.

Similarly, McGroarty (1991) refers to a study done by Heath (1986) that looked at the language socialization tendencies of various immigrants in northern California. It was discovered that because the majority of Mexican American children were accustomed to spending their time with peers and not adults, they

tended to gravitate towards their classmates for help instead of their instructor. Having been socialized to interact primarily with their peers, they had developed certain language patterns that associated them with this particular linguistic community.

Psycholinguistic Issues Behind the Written Expression of a Second Language

Galvan (1986) introduces an important correlation between the language, thought pattern, and culture of the first system (L1, T1, and C1) and that of the second system (L2, T2, and C2). He claims that when students are asked to write an essay in their second language, their "habitual thought patterns and sequence of organization" will reflect the author's native language. His study uses bilingual/bicultural graduate students' linguistic and cultural background to determine what kind of influence these aspects will have on their writing process. He claims that "language overlaps with culture insofar as language is the carrier of culture and the line between language and thought disappears when language is contrasted with thought" (Galvan, 1986, p. 4). He states that "native language acquisition is not only a matter of acquiring a system of symbols, but also a matter of acquiring a system of values, beliefs, and attitudes" (Galvan, p. 10). Therefore, acquiring a a second language requires that the speaker also adopt the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the second culture.

What happens in a bilingual community is that there is suddenly an overlapping of these two systems that the members need to integrate as they try to adopt the new language and culture while still maintaining their first language and its cultural significance in their lives. Orally, they are often able to maintain the two simultaneously. However, Galvan (1986) suggests that the writing process poses other problems. He states that competence in writing occurs only if there is competence in the LTC (language, thought and culture) of the second language. He claims that "odd writing will result if such competence in either one or more of the three components is not mastered" (Galvan, 1986, p. 18).

Galvan's study was done on bilingual/bicultural graduate students who were asked to compose aloud during a writing session. He gives examples of the writings of two bilingual/bicultural graduate students, revealing the effect of their two systems on their production of a composition in English. One student, Nora, demonstrates almost constant interaction between her two systems. She often repeats the word in English after she has already stated it in Spanish, showing her direct translation process. Not only does the oral composing help demonstrate her initial mistakes, it also shows how she is able to correct herself by experimenting with different words. In the beginning of her composition, she says to herself, *"Studies have been* prooved. . .*no*. . .*cases have been* prooved. . .*no that's not the word I am looking for*. . . . *It has, yes."* And she continues with her composing process writing *"It has been proven,"* now having found the appropriate verb tense.

Zhang (1990) also attests to this notion of applying one's native language and thought patterns to a new language by quoting Brown (1987) who states that "human beings will approach any new problem with an existing set of cognitive structures, and through insight, logical thinking, and various froms of hypothesis testing, call upon whatever prior experiences they have had and whatever cognitive structures they possess to attempt a solution (Zhang, 1990, p. 81). In other words, they depend somewhat on the knowledge they have of their first language in order to be able to interpret the second language. This process is often necessary in the acquisition process since the learner needs to grasp onto something tangible when approaching new concepts.

Galvan also uses the term "metalinguistic awareness" and "metacognitive awareness" to explain the process that occurs when a bilingual speaker switches back and forth between L1 and L2 in order to find the appropriate word or phrase. He links metalinguistic awareness to the "monitor model" which is described more completely in Jones' article "Problems With Monitor Use in Second Language Composing" (1985). Jones discusses the problem of over-monitoring language production during the writing process due to a writer's uncertainty about his competence in writing in the

second language. He states that this "'conscious monitoring' of syntactic form takes precedence over other parts of the process (such as generating ideas, connecting them, and organizing them for the audience)" (Jones, 1985, p. 97). He quotes Stephen Krashen by saying that native speakers have a "feel for correctness" when producing certain grammatical structures. "Grammatical sentences 'sound right,' or 'feel right,' and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated" (Jones, 1985, p. 97). This "feeling of correctness" is sometimes what second language learners lack. As evident in Galvan's study, Nora had to switch between both languages in order to determine which one was appropriate. She had to use her cognitive knowledge of both languages in order to determine what would fit best. Thus, Jones claims that this is a "conscious process" for the second language learner, one that takes an awareness of the syntactical foundations of the speaker's two languages.

This conscious awareness of grammatical structures is much more prevalent during the writing process because the written language is much more permanent than the oral. Jones states that "the social consequences of producing obviously ungrammatical utterances in conversation are much less severe than those of making similar errors in writing" (Jones, 1985, p. 99). By engaging in a conversation, the bilingual speaker can determine from the facial expressions and questions of the other participant what points she has failed to make clear due to misformed grammatical constructions. She has the advantage of the native speaker's intuitive sense of the language in helping her reconstruct her sentence patterns. It is not socially unacceptable for her to grapple with the language as she is speaking since she is able to correct herself properly often with the guidance of the other speaker.

Unlike the writing process, oral interaction also gives second language speakers the opportunity to test what they already know about the language to what they still need to learn. Seliger (1988) states that the ideal input for second language learners is that which is a little beyond their capability (Seliger, 1988). He says that "this will cause the learner to "stretch" his or her grammatical ability and

call on contextual cues in order to comprehend the new input" (Seliger, 1988, p. 36). According to Vygotsky (1986), this stage would be considered the "zone of proximal development." Even though he does not write of second language speakers specifically, his idea that learners experience a period where the presence of outside help or guidance while acquiring new concepts actually speeds up the learning process is applicable to second language acquisition. A speaker who is still modifying his speech patterns of his second language is going to acquire them more quickly if he is speaking to a native speaker or one who demonstrates proficiency in the second language than if he is trying to write the language on his own. His need to communicate verbally is going to a much more motivating force than to be able to express his ideas in written form simply because communication is a more immediate need.

However, because the writing process does not provide the advantage of another's presence to coach the writer towards greater clarification of her ideas, the writer is forced to depend completely on her own sense of the second language, her fear of forming improper utterances often stifling her ideas. Her written ideas will seem more permanent since she does not have the luxury of correcting her errors as she would during the progression of a conversation. It is much more threatening for her to write her ideas since they will have to stand on their own. This difference between speaking and writing can probably account for some the apprehension felt by Spanish-English bilinguals when they are writing in English (Fayer, 1986).

This apprehension will often cause a bilingual writer to become what Jones (1985) terms a "monitor overuser," or a bilingual who insists on questioning her production even when it prevents her from creating what would have been an appropriate grammatical structure. He also introduces the term "monitor underuser" to describe those bilinguals who rarely monitor while creating a written text. In his study, he uses two female participants, one who is a native speaker of South American Spanish and one who is a native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese. The

Spanish speaker, Lianna, is a monitor overuser while the Portuguese speaker is a monitor underuser. The main difference between these two bilingual speakers, Jones discovered, was that Lianna was much more focused on the grammatical rules of the English language and often compared them to those in Spanish, whereas Catrina "expressed little interest in learning or using rules so long as she could be understood" (p. 101).

Jones (1985) refers to Clark and Clark (1977) who explain how written text is produced if the monitor is not used. They show that "the general syntactic plan of the sentence is worked out before lexical items and phrases are chosen" (p. 103). More skilled bilingual writers (like Nora) who are writing in their second language are able to develop their ideas "without being sidetracked by lexical and syntactical difficulties" (Zamel, 1983, p. 175). When they encounter a problem while writing, they either "write down the English word in question and circle it, leave a blank space for a word or phrase, or, as in Nora's case, they use their own native language when the English word has failed them" (Zamel, 1983, p. 175). However, the opposite is true for overusers. Instead of developing the syntactic plan first, they concentrate on the lexical items they mean to convey. They must therefore rework their ideas so as to adapt to the appropriate syntactical rules. This means that their original thoughts might not necessarily comply with the structure they must use to communicate meaning in the second language. Therefore, Jones states the reasons for the long pauses overusers have while generating ideas is due to the fact that they must fit these ideas to a structure before writing them down. Lexical items must be kept in short term memory while the bilingual tries to construct an appropriate form to express them with.

The problem that often occurs when they attempt this process of creating proper grammatical structures for their ideas is premature editing. In a study perfomed by Betancourt and Phinney (1987) that focused on a Spanish/English bilinguals at the University of Puerto Rico, many of the students were prone to the problem of premature editing when writing in English. They focused primarily

on the sentence level rather than on the piece as a whole. However, this approach was not simply due to their self-consciousness about English as a second language; rather, they were conducting the writing process as they were taught. The traditional writing method in most Spanish-speaking societies focuses on editing and formal details which they were simply extending to their compositions in English. Betancourt and Phinney noticed, however, that there was, greater apprehension among the undergraduates than the graduates (most of whom were already ESL instructors). This apprehension among the undergraduates caused them to engage in more premature editing due to their lack of confidence in their second language abilities. Many of these bilinguals are also overusers, like Lianna (Jones, 1985), but their reason for being so is twofold. Not only are they apprehensive about their English language skills, but they have been taught to concentrate on the editing process even in their own native language.

Syntactic Problems in Spanish-English Bilinguals' Written Expression of English

Galvan's study (1986) on bilingual/bicultural graduate students indicates several instances where there is confusion when the writer tries to apply her first language system to the second. Although one of his partcipants, Nora (who was discussed earlier), seems to write fluently, certain constructions of the English language seem to her particularly problematic. For example, she becomes confused about the verb tense combination when she wants to use an "if/then" construction. She switches to Spanish in order to determine whether she needs to use the subjunctive form or not. Because the subjunctive tense is used so frequently in the Spanish language, it is logical that she would question its presence in this type of construction. She also tests the Spanish form of the subjunctive when she uses an adjective clause beginning with "that." In Spanish, the subjunctive tense is commonly used in this construction; however, in English there is no direct equivalent to

this form of the subjunctive. The subjunctive tense is used much less frequently in English. Throughout her process, she seems to have the most trouble with verb tenses. There are only a few instances where she needs to correct herself on her usage of nouns and adjectives. This, according to Galvan, shows how "she seems to interpret the "world out there" through both her native and acquired LTC systems" (p. 21).

Some of the common syntactic errors that occur when a student applies her linguistic knowledge of her first language when composing in the second are evident in Ray's study of the Latino students in Detroit (1993). In the translation of a written assignment from Spanish to English, a student writes,

> *I am not agree with passage A because I don't think that nobody is forced to go to school. This passage reminds me of my uncle because I just got here (in U.S.) three years ago and I finished high school and now I go to college and his sons are here since 1976 and the guys none of them finished high school. They are working on construction and because I go to college I think he's a little jealous. . . .* *(p. 311)*

Even though this passage reveals a number of syntactic errors, her meaning is still conveyed. However, these errors indicate that she is applying grammatical rules that she has learned in her first language to her second language without testing them against a native speaker. In her first sentence, she constructs her verb based on her knowledge of grammatical Spanish while at the same time trying to employ what she already knows of English grammar. In Spanish, "I am not agree with" would translate to "no estoy acuerdo con." The verb "estoy" translates to "am" not "do"; she is failing to make the proper negative construction in English. However, she does use the appropriate verb form of "agree" when in Spanish "acuerdo" would have translated to the past participle "agreed." The negative construction causes further problems in the second half of the sentence when she uses the double negative *"don't"* and *"nobody"* in the same clause. In Spanish the equivalent would be *"no pienso que*

nadie," which literally translated is "I don't think nobody." Therefore, she is using the direct translation process to construct her sentence. It still makes sense to a native speaker, but this type of syntactical error indicates her still heavy reliance on the first language. Noticeable syntactical problems do not arise again until she states, "his sons are here since 1976," where she is forgetting to form the compound verb "have been."

Semantically, the writer is able to express her thoughts so that they are understood. However, she does reveal a Spanish language tone which is indicated by the redundancy in her subject *"the guys none of them."* Instead of saying *"none of the guys"* or *"the guys didn't,"* she is able to point to emphasize her subject by pointing to them first and then expressing them again with the negative pronoun *"none."* In Spanish, she would have said, *"los chicos (estos) ninguno de ellos"* which is how she has translated it in English. Spoken Spanish usually reveals this repetition and redundancy much more obviously; yet, sometimes written Spanish needs to be more redundant in order to convey a similar meaning that would have been otherwise emphasized by verbal cues and gestures (Rivers, Azevedo & Heflin, 1991).

In Zhang's findings (1990), there was also evidence of many instances of direct translation among Hispanics who were asked to respond to a series of questions in English. Their experience with English ranged from 0 - 6 years, so it did not seem unusual that these learners, especially those who had been in the U.S. the least number of years, depended highly on direct translation from L1 (Spanish) to L2 (English). For example, he quotes a student who writes, *"I'm going to learn some sports . . . in benefit of (en beneficio de) my health."* This sentence, although syntactically incorrect, would make sense to a native speaker as would, *"I think to return (pienso volver) in 2 to 4 years."* However, a sentence such as the following would lose its semantic origin in the translation process: *"I want help to people."* In Spanish, this sentence would have read, *"Quiero ayudar a la gente."* The *personal "a"* which must precede any person is not translatable. *"A"* can be used as a preposition meaning *"to"* or *"at"* but only when it is not being used

as the *personal "a."* This student has tried to make a direct translation, overextending his comprehension of the preposition *"a"* to all contexts.

As Py (1992) mentions in his study of Spanish migrant workers in France who were in the process of acquiring French as a second language, there is an internal restructuring process of syntactical rules that must occur before they can communicate effectively.

Semantic Problems in Spanish-English Bilinguals' Written Expression of English

Again, Galvan's study of bilingual/biculturals (1986) also reveals the semantic problems this language group (Spanish-English) encounters when forming their ideas. He states that "even though they are proficient speakers, they have not fully internalized many of the semantic nuances (connotations, denotations, synonyms, antonyms) of the English language" (p. 29). In other words, he claims that they must exert more effort to produce "the right words," particularly when writing, because they do not come as naturally to them and are continually struggling with their production of the appropriate lexical items. In addition to direct translation, he uses a writing sample of one of his participants, Nora, to demonstrate how bilinguals will often use cognate words as direct equivalents. He shows through examples in her written text how she originally formed her ideas in Spanish and then used the cognates of certain words to form the word in English. Even though this method is sometimes relatively accurate (e. g. aumentar = to augment), it is clear that the idea was initially formed in the first language.

For most bilingual writers then, the writing process becomes "a deliberate and conscious effort" (Galvan, 1986, p. 31). They are often switching from the first system (language, thought, and culture of the first language) to the second system while still working within certain syntactical constraints. Because this process can be excessively complicated, semantics are usually the first to be

affected since the writer must be so preoccupied with how best to communicate her ideas. As mentioned earlier, the written text must stand on its own which often makes bilingual writers even more self-conscious of their proper use of the language. "Confusion in written communication, especially cross-cultural written communication, can often be traced to failures in interpreting LTC (language, thought, and culture)" (p. 34). Therefore, problems with communication can often be resolved if the writer can express her ideas to another bilingual who shares her same linguistic and cultural background. Another bilingual will be able to recognize the thought pattern even if the syntax is incorrect.

According to a protocol produced by Nora in the same study (Galvan, 1986), she reveals that she treats certain types of her writing in English differently. Just as the distinction was made earlier in this review when Spanish was the language used in more intimate situations, Nora claims that her personal writing is most of the time in Spanish because she is writing to her family and friends. However, when she is writing for the university, the writing is impersonal and almost always in English. She associates her English with a formal environment, school, and her Spanish with an informal environment, home.

Similarly, the other participant in the study, Miguel, also claimed that he made distinctions between the types of writing he did. What he found most surprising to himself, however, even after having made the separation between formal or academic writing and informal or creative writing, was that he could only use English to write plays and Spanish to write poems. Whereas Nora's distinction was clear in terms of whom she felt most intimate with when engaging in the writing process, Miguel's separation of languages occured within the same genre - creative writing. Perhaps because poetry elicits feeling and emotion while playwriting requires accuracy in dialogue, Miguel was able to divide the two even though both require creative ability. Since Miguel's first language was Spanish, it is likely that he feels more comfortable expressing his emotions in it, while English as his second language has become his

more accurate language. As mentioned earlier, many bilinguals feel self-conscious about their proficiency in their first language, especially if the emphasis was mostly oral as they learned. Most bilingual Spanish-English speakers learn English in a formal setting and so they come to view their second language as the more accurate one for writing purposes.

Nora and Miguel's awareness of audience and its influence on their choice of language points to an important aspect of the Spanish language, namely, the distinction made between people one knows well and those one treats in a more distant manner. In Spanish, the second person singular has two pronouns: *"tú"* and *"usted."* *"Tú"* refers to the people who are close friends or who are within the family circle while *"Usted"* is used to refer to all of those who are in positions of power, who are older and require more respect, or who are acquaintances (Rivers, Azevedo, & Heflin, 1988). This distinction is not made in English; therefore, Spanish speakers have to learn the appropriate language expressions that make this treatment clear in English.

Another aspect of the Spanish language that is often difficult to express in English is the repetition of one idea. A sentence such as *"me he equivocado"* literally translated means *"I have mistaken myself"* instead of the more simple English translation *"I am mistaken."* The emphasis on the subject is inherent because of the use of the reflexive verb *"equivocarse."* The subject naturally reflects itself through the verb construction, giving it stronger meaning. In English, this emphasis on the subject must be deliberate and might sound awkward when uttered in an improper context.

Repetition is also used if the agent of an action does not want to claim responsibility for a certain incident. Unlike the previous example in which the subject is claiming full responsibility for her being mistaken, a sentence such as *"se me rompio el vaso,"* literally translated as *"the glass broke itself from me,"* is in standard English *"I broke the glass."* Not only does this example show how much the glass is at fault because of the reflexive verb *"romperse,"* but the fact that the true agent does not hold herself responsible for the

incident demonstrates the idea in the Spanish language of fate as a controlling factor of an outcome. The real subject is not necessarily responsible for what has happened, and the language structure accommodates this idea. The literal English 'sounds' awkward and incorrect to a native speaker, and therefore, a Spanish-English bilingual, might have difficulty trying to express the similar semantics of the Spanish version in an English equivalent.

Needed Research

The body of this literature review has focused on the factors, primarily sociolinguistic, that affect the oral and written expression of Spanish-English bilinguals. A description of the U.S. Hispanic community revealed the problems many bilinguals encounter when they are attempting to use one or both of the languages in formal and informal settings. Because they have been exposed both to the Hispanic community and the American, there occurs not only a mixture of cultural ideas and mores but often a deliberate mixing of the languages. Even though this cross-over of the cultures and languages creates some confusion and frustration among its members, many bilinguals feel that they are a part of a unique linguistic community. Their social interaction with one another is crucial to forming this bond.

However, because they depend so highly on oral communication to maintain their two languages or a mixture of them, they are usually not as acutely aware of the subtle syntactic and semantic problems that are often more evident in writing. Some of these problems students have experienced when writing have been documented in studies; however, the specific syntactic and semantic issues have yet to be fully explored. What we need then are studies that look closely at the Spanish-English bilingual. It is imperative that the research include the linguistic and cultural background of the participants in the study in order to give a full picture of the bilingual individual and to give some insight as to what occurs during the transfer process.

Based on Valdés' (1991) interpretation of what these studies need to include in order to accurately portray the Spanish-English bilingual, my question is: How do the cultural backgrounds of Spanish-English bilinguals affect their attitudes towards both languages? How do sociolinguistic factors influence their oral and written expression? What types of semantic and syntactic problems do they encounter in the transfer process? And finally, what connections do these bilinguals make between their first and second language in their oral and written expression of them?

The Study

Overview of the Study

My study was based on the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of six Spanish-English bilinguals, all of whom now reside in the U.S. Each participant was involved in a two-part individual session that included both an interview and a directed translation exercise. I extracted a major portion of my data from the interview since this instrument allowed me to see most clearly how the participants felt about their bilingualism. Each session lasted about one hour (some were only forty-five minutes while others were an hour and fifteen minutes). The discrepancy in time was due to the amount of elaboration each participant was willing to include during the two parts of the session. The first and more involved part of the session was designed solely for the interview (see Appendix A). The second and shorter part of the session was designed for the completion of the translation exercises (see Appendix B) which I used to support the data that was stated in the interview. By putting the interview first, I was able to get a firm idea of the participants' background in Spanish and their attitudes towards both languages. Because there are so many levels of bilingualism, I wanted to get a sense of how they have used both Spanish and English in their lives before assuming certain patterns, including the social implications of choosing to speak Spanish, English, or a mixture of both in a given situation.

Setting and Participants

Six Spanish-English bilinguals participated in this study. This selection was made due to participant availability. Because gender was not considered a significant variable, the fact that all of the participants happened to be female is purely coincidental. The participants included one bilingual student (mid-teens) from the high school where I teach (Drew College Preparatory), two students from San Francisco State University (late teens to early twenties),

and three bilingual adults (ages thirty to mid-forties). (For detailed profiles of the participants, see Table 1). I chose this range of participants to get a sense of how age would affect their response to the questions asked. All of the participants spoke Spanish as their first language and English as their second. Most of the participants spoke Spanish at home and English at school, which indicated that they were aware of when each language was appropriate to use. Because these participants were chosen on availability, they were not all from the same Spanish-speaking country. However, coincidentally, three of the six participants (fifty-percent) were of Mexican descent which is an appropriate representation of the dominating Hispanic group in the U.S. The other half represented Central American countries (Nicaragua and El Salvador) and Spain. It is important to remember that this study focuses on only a sample of bilinguals whose experiences should not be generalized. Their feelings and opinions are reflective of their particular situations and should not be regarded as necessarily representative of an attitude shared by other members of their country of origin. However, it can be assumed that many of the conflicts they encounter, both culturally and linguistically, could shed insight to the problems other Spanish-English bilinguals may face in American society.

Because the interviews and translation exercises were taped, the only restriction on the setting in the study was that the session be conducted in a quiet area where we would not be frequently interrupted. I met with the high school student in my office at Drew; the others I met at a time and place convenient to the them.

Interview Data

Procedure

I began each session with an interview. I created a number of particular questions that I intended to use only as a base for our conversation. Because each session was taped, I was able to concentrate on making the participant feel comfortable. I wanted the interview to appear very informal during each session so that

the participants could feel free to switch into Spanish if they preferred. Because the interview was the most crucial to my understanding of when bilinguals feel it appropriate to use either language, I transcribed each session afterwords and quoted their experiences and opinions to support my analysis of how their backgrounds have affected their view towards language. This portion of the session lasted thirty to forty-five minutes, depending on the participants' elaboration during the questioning.

Instrument

The interview consisted of seventeen questions that focused on the participants' individual backgrounds as bilingual speakers of Spanish and English (see Appendix A). The questions were written in both English and Spanish in order to accomodate the participants' preferred language. This instrument was to yield the majority of the information I needed to create an adequate profile of each participant.

Analysis

The interview was to be similar to an open conversation even though it was based on the listed questions. I wrote the questions in both English and Spanish, but I began each interview in English since that is my stronger language. I also wanted them to feel as comfortable as possible so that they would be willing to talk freely about their backgrounds and linguistic experiences. From this "conversation," I was able to determine their cultural and educational backgrounds, attitudes towards mixing, general transfer problems, and the sociolinguistic factors that have affected their oral and written expression of both languages. I used this information as the foundation of my findings, creating thematic categories that correlated with the patterns that arose as the participants explained their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Translation Data

Procedure

During the second part of the session, I tried to elicit other patterns these bilinguals make when translating from one language to the other through the eleven questions I asked them to answer. I asked them to compose their answers orally as they wrote to see what types of blocks or transfer problems they encountered. I wanted to look specifically at what sociolinguistic factors they bring to certain questions which might convey different meanings in the two languages and also any syntactic problems that might occur in the direct translation from one to the other. I focused primarily on how their first language, Spanish, has affected their second language, English, and what words or word phrases are literally untranslatable because of the meaning they carry with them. I also hoped to see if they showed any awareness to the innate rules of code-switching.

Instruments

The translation exercise constituted the second part of the session. I have included two versions of the exercise. One version is what the participants saw (see Appendix B) and the other explains what I looked for in each section (see Appendix C). The sentences were divided according to certain patterns I expected to see, including both syntactic and semantic differences. These differences often overlap in each example. All of these sentences are stated in Spanish.

I also included a brief section on code-switching that consists of four examples of intrasentential switching. Each example includes two versions, one of which is more appropriate than the other (according to Sanchez, 1983).

Analysis

Since I interviewed a range of people from different segments of the Hispanic community, I chose to state all of the sentences in Spanish so as to prevent special references to only one particular linguistic group that might interfere with their responses. However, what I failed to realize was that my own experience as an elective bilingual of Spanish affected a few of the sentences I created. Since I learned Spanish as a second language in Spain, three or four of the sentences, particularly ones that were supposed to represent greater emphasis and repetition, were not examples of standard Spanish but rather a dialectal version of Castilian Spanish. Therefore, I concentrated not on so much *what* they wrote by *how* they came to the final translation. I wanted to see how they viewed the meaning they wished to convey in English.

In the section on code-switching, the participants were to identify instances of proper code-switching. I anticipated that most of my participants were probably not aware of the grammatical rules they followed when they code-switched, but I had hoped to get them to focus on how each sentence sounded to them so that they could then choose instinctively. However, because only half of the participants (three) were code-switchers, this section was not analyzed.

Findings

Overview of the Findings

I have designed some initial profiles of my participants so that my findings section will be easier to follow (see Table 1). While I believe that it is dangerous to classify individuals because of variables I did not consider in this study, I have used some of the possible classification labels that Valdés (1991) identified, namely Spanish-dominant bilinguals and English-dominant bilinguals, to facilitate my analysis. In addition, I have added a classification label of my own - *impartial bilinguals* - to describe two individuals that Valdes did not seem to account for in her study. The connotation of this label is not that these bilinguals do not care about language, rather, that they appear for the most part not to have a dominant language. Each category is subdivided into four sections that trace the participants' cultural backgrounds, attitudes towards language-mixing, experiences with formal education, and the semantic and syntactic dissonance in their oral and written expression of the two languages.

Spanish-Dominant Bilinguals

Cultural Identity Conflicts

As Valdés (1991) indicates in her report on bilingual minorities, bilinguals often identify more with one language than the other. Two of my participants, Sirena and Sara, admitted to a stronger identification with the Spanish language. In the interview, both women concentrated heavily on the difficulties they had upon their arrival to the United States. Because Sirena came as older child and Sara as a young adult, they felt their conflicts with the American culture were heightened by their need to assimilate quickly. They found that their first years in the U.S. were frustrating and difficult due to the pressure they felt while trying to acquire English. Whether in school or at work, Spanish was the

Table 1

Participant Profiles
(Names of the six participants have been changed to respect their privacy.)

Sirena:

Bilingual status: Spanish-dominant bilingual (circumstantial)
Country of origin: El Salvador
Number of years in the U.S.: twelve
Formal education in both languages:
(in El Salvador) Spanish until fourth grade
(in the U.S.) English throughout high school and college, some college level literature classes in Spanish

Sara:

Bilingual status: Spanish-dominant bilingual (elective)
Country of origin: Spain
Number of years in the U.S.: seven
Formal education in both languages:
(in Spain) primarily Spanish, some higher level English classes in high school and college
(in the U.S.) graduate program in health-related field in English

Eugenia:

Bilingual status: English-dominant bilingual (circumstantial)
Country of origin: U.S., parents from Mexico
Number of years in the U.S.: eighteen (lifetime)
Formal education in both languages:
(in the U.S.) English throughout grade school, some high school Spanish, English in college

Elena:

Bilingual status: English-dominant bilingual (circumstantial)
Country of origin: Mexico
Number of years in the U.S.: twenty-six
Formal education in both languages:
(in Mexico) too young to attend school
(in the U.S.) English, some college level conversational Spanish classes, law school in English

Participant Profiles cont.

Irene:

Bilingual status: impartial bilingual (circumstantial)
Country of origin: Mexico
Number of years in the U.S.: thirty-three
Formal education in both languages:
(in Mexico) primarily Spanish and some English until seventh grade
(in the U.S.) English in high school and college (one literature class in Spanish), doctorate program in psychology in English

Inma:

Bilingual status: impartial bilingual (circumstantial)
Country of origin: U.S., parents from Nicaragua
Number of years in the U.S.: sixteen (lifetime)
Formal education in both languages:
(in the U.S.) English, some high school Spanish

stronger language for them. Although both women now consider themselves bilingual, they still experience blocking in both their oral and written expression of English. In addition, they have always had a clear sense of separation between the two languages since separating their first language (Spanish) from their second language (English) was the only way they could survive in their "second" culture.

These two Spanish-dominant bilinguals have lived in the United States for a comparable amount of time (Sirena, twelve years, and Sara, seven years). While Sirena came to the U.S. at ten and Sara at twenty-two (her first visit), their experiences are parallel in the sense that both have had to immerse themselves in the American culture in order to achieve English proficiency. Although Sirena is what Valdés would have termed a circumstantial bilingual (her mother decided to move here with the family in the hope for a better life) and Sara an elective bilingual (she chose to come here on her own accord because she wanted to improve her English), they still had to undergo similar social difficulties because their English language skills were not yet strong enough for them to consider themselves functional bilinguals. Sirena was not hesitant to admit the insecuritites she felt in the process of acquiring her second language. She says,

> *All throughout high school, it was pretty tough for me. Even now in college sometimes I kind of feel like "well, what does this mean?" But I think I'll get over it eventually. I feel like I'm still learning. I have to read it over and over again until I get it.*

Likewise, Sara explains how she is still traumatized by the anxiety that she is not being understood by native English speakers. As a speaker who has acquired a second language as an adult, she realizes that she will probably always maintain an accent.

> *I accept that that I have a hard accent and the only point is that my message gets through - that's fine. But sometimes when people ask me "what did you say?" - something goes into*

> *my head like "oh my god, they don't understand me because I don't speak correct English," and maybe it's just because they were not listening but part of me is like "it's my fault" and I start to get nervous and I speak faster.*

These two women both claimed to have had traumatizing experiences with the English language during the first years in the U.S. Because Sirena had received very little formal education in English in her country of origin (El Salvador), she was at even more of a disadvantage than Sara who had at least some background in the language. When Sirena came to the U.S., her academic achievement was higher than fourth-grade level, which would have been the appropriate grade for her age, so they placed her in a higher grade level. Unfortunately, since her English speaking skills were so minimal, the teacher often kept her separated from the other children so that a tutor could instruct her individually. She describes her experience in a public school in Richmond, California:

> *When I was in elementary school, they put me separate from the other kids. I didn't know the language and I had a tutor, you know. They had this little machine. I was the only one that was separated from the kids and had to learn separately. I had to learn the language fast.*

As she recounted these moments in elementary school, it became apparent that this individual attention was actually quite damaging to her social development. She says, *"It was bad (making friends) because I didn't know anyone and I couldn't communicate."* When describing a test she had to take every year throughout junior high school, she indicates how singled out she felt from the others.

> *Somebody would come into the class and I would be just sitting there and kind of . . .just like the whole class was interrupted and this woman would come in and she's like, "You have to take a test." I'm like, "What?"*

Sirena's early school experience in the U.S. clearly shows how difficult assimilation was for her because she lacked the necessary

language skills. She feels that her struggle was exacerbated by the fact that her teachers treated her differently which in turn stifled her from developing friendships with the others. She always had a sense that there was an invisible boundary between her and the other students because she had not yet mastered a command of the language.

Likewise, Sara's first visit to the U.S. at twenty-two years old proved to be equally traumatic in the sense that she, too, was unable to communicate effectively nor comprehend what was said to her. She recalls her experience as a camp counselor in Tennessee as extremely trying and humbling. Indeed, she admits that she thought her English was good before she came to the U.S.; yet, in Tennessee, she felt paralyzed. She says, *"I couldn't communicate. It was very difficult. I promised myself I had to learn English."* Upon making this decision, she returned a few years later to teach Spanish at a high school in Minnesota. This second visit was much more successful primarily because she felt more confident about her language skills. She comments, *"During that time, I improved my English and I went back to Tennessee.* (laughs) *It was much better. We just communicated."*

However, as an adult elective bilingual, she seems more aware of cultural differences, not just language barriers. In fact, her awareness of American peculiarities began not here but in Barcelona where she was enrolled in English classes led by American instructors. She says jokingly about an American female instructor, *"I think the Americans are funny. She* (the instructor) *dressed differently everyday. It became a joke - what would she be wearing today?"* She adds to the anecdote by describing the girls whom she lived with in Minnesota. Even though she was about ten years older than they were, they made her wear something different everyday, even if it meant borrowing their clothes. At the time, Sara thought this habit was a strange reflection on American values. However, ironically, she admits that she also now exhibits this trait. She claims that she finds herself trying to assimilate to American culture by adopting lifestyle traits such as this one but adds that, as an adult, it is sometimes difficult.

Attitudes Towards Language-Mixing

As Spanish-dominant speakers, Sirena and Sara generally view the mixing of their two languages as negative. Because they both learned Spanish first and came to the U.S. only after having internalized all of the structures of their first language, their experience with the second language produced greater anxiety. Because they both feel such a strong tie to their first language and their first culture, loyalty to the Spanish language compels them to keep it separate from English. While Sirena admits that she sometimes mixes languages with her younger sister, who was much younger when she came to the U.S. and therefore identifies more with the American culture, she claims that when she is together with the rest of the family, they only speak Spanish. English is the language she speaks at school; Spanish is the language of the home.

Sara's desire to keep the two languages separate is more than just a familial decision. Her reasoning is based on her cultural pride of the language. Perhaps because acquiring English was such a challenge for her, she believes in the purity of both the Spanish and the English language. She does not want the two to mix for fear that both languages will become tainted. Her daughter, who was born here and is essentially bilingual, speaks Spanish at home to her parents (Sara's husband is also an elective bilingual) and English at school. Sara chose not to send her to a bilingual school specifically so that her daughter would be in an environment where she was learning English just with other Americans. She is extremely adamant about her daughter speaking the two languages separately, never mixing them intrasententially. She says,

> *When she speaks English, I don't want her to mix English with Spanish and sometimes now she's talking to me in Spanish and (when) she doesn't know something, she just uses the English word and I just keep telling her "Spanish is that . . . English is that." I don't want her to speak Spanglish. I don't like that.* (referring to Chicanos) *They don't speak good Spanish and they don't speak good English.*

Sara's attitude is indicative of what Kirschner and Stephens (1987) describe as a hierarchical view of the Spanish language that has been established and controlled by sociopolitical factors. Clearly, Sara wants to identify herself as a Spaniard first and an American second. She does not see herself as a part of a bilingual community that accepts language-mixing as a viable mode of communication. However, because Sara's daughter is growing up in the U.S., she has naturally been exposed to the Spanish-English bilingual groups through school and therefore is acquiring some of the euphemisms of other Spanish-speaking groups. Sara says that it is a problem with her daughter now that she uses "Mexican Spanish." For example, instead of saying *"empujar"* (to push), she says *"empuchar."* Sara explains that if you use *"empuchar"* in Spain, this signifies that you don't have any kind of education. Thus, according to Sara's interpretation, certain nuances of the Spanish language can reflect the social status of the speaker. Of course, a Mexican might disagree with Sara's opinion, but it is important to recognize that language can indeed act as more than just a mode of communication. A slight pronunciation difference will separate very easily one Spanish-speaker from another, identifying the status of one to another. Kirschner and Stephens (1987) argue that it is this negative attitude towards language-mixing that needs to be scrutinized so that prejudices are not formed against certain bilingual communities.

Experience With Formal Education in the Two Languages

In order to determine the problems these Spanish-dominant bilinguals face when approaching both languages, it is important to note their experiences with formal education in Spanish and English. Both Sirena and Sara have received formal education in both languages including college level courses.

While Sirena's formal education in Spanish was truncated upon her arrival to the U.S., she has since enrolled in a number of Spanish language and literature courses at the university where she now attends. She claims that it is very different to learn Spanish again in

a formal setting. She says that not only is it strange to hear interpretations from Spanish-speakers from other cultures (her professor is Spanish), but she can really note a dramatic difference in the various speech patterns. Referring to the Spaniards' approach towards language, she says,

> *I cannot talk that fast . . . I think in Central America, we speak a little more slow. I don't know. I don't want to be, you know, differentiating too much, but I think we speak a little bit clearer so that people can understand.*

Like Sara when she spoke of why she chooses to keep a separation between her two languages, Sirena is making a clear distinction between her culture's approach towards Spanish and that of other other Spanish-speaking cultures. While she is more careful to hedge her opinion and seems not to show the same judgement, she is still emphasizing the uniqueness of her Spanish language experience. When she compares the Spanish she speaks at home with her family to the Spanish in her college literature classes, she says,

> *It's not the type of Spanish that I would learn in school, you know. It's very basic everyday Spanish. Sometimes it's hard to understand in my lit classes. I love the challenge. It's very difficult. . . I'm doing all I can to really learn Spanish and English at the same time. I think it's very important to keep that up for everyone.*

Sirena's dedication to her education is admirable. The challenge for her now seems to be making the connection between the Spanish that she practices at home to the Spanish that she learns at school. She must battle between the informal and the formal and arrive at her own understanding of the two. She discusses how she used to have a clearer division between the two languages - English at school and Spanish at home - but now she must also see Spanish as a formal language.

Sara, too, has received formal education in both languages. However, unlike Sirena who spent most of her teenage years

acquiring English in an English-speaking environment, Sara's formal education in English was in Spain. Therefore, while she was receiving a formal education in both languages, she still had not mastered the English language by the time she came to the U.S. simply because she had not experienced the intense exposure to her second language. However, after seven years of residence in the U.S. and her pursuance of a graduate degree at an American university, she has been able to master near fluency in English. The details of the transfer problems she still encounters in the oral and written production of English will be discussed in the following section.

Semantic and Syntactic Dissonance in Oral and Written Production of the Two Languages

These women's experiences with formal education in both languages is crucial in understanding the dissonance they will experience in their oral and written production of the languages. Since it was established above that both have received instruction in written and spoken versions of Spanish and English, it is not surprising that these women feel confident in both languages even though they are still classified as Spanish-dominant bilinguals.

Sirena comments that even though her thoughts often begin in Spanish, she feels she can write sentences better in English. This may be attributed to the fact that there was a gap in her formal education in Spanish of about eight years. She spent the majority of her high school years composing in English. However, she now holds a part-time job as a translator and finds that when she writes in English, she thinks in Spanish, and when she writes in Spanish, she thinks in English. Because the job requires her to switch so rapidly between languages, she seems to be using one language to help her form meaning in the other. Sometimes she even finds herself saying words in Spanish with an American accent and she has to correct herself. She expresses some of the anxiety she feels when translating: *"I get very nervous when I have to translate something. I think about it too much and I feel like there is a problem."* As

Jones (1985) points out, this anxiety is often caused by overuse of the monitor. Yet, while Jones discusses bilinguals who are composing in English, Sirena's task is even more complex because she is having to continuously switch back and forth from text she did not even create. She describes how she tries to make meaning from the work she is given: *"The translation company does it word for word and it doesn't make sense. I translate the way I would understand it and not be so fancy with words."* Essentially, she is saying that once she becomes less self-conscious (i.e., turns off the monitor), she is able to produce more fluent language.

Sara also comments on her inability to become less self-conscious of her second language production when comparing herself to her also bilingual husband. She thinks that her husband's Spanish is better simply because he is not so conscious of the way he speaks. She says, *"He thinks that he speaks well and that's it. And that's a better thing to do. For me, language has been and still is a handicap."* Sara sees her overconsciousness of her speech production as an inhibitor. She claims that the more relaxed she is, the less likely she is to think about the correctness of her word structure.

> *When I'm at work, I think unconsciously in English. The problem is, like I say, in school if I have to give a lecture or presentation at any given time, I lost my thought, there is no more words that come to me. But in Spanish it's easy. I get stuck* (in English).

It is evident from this passage that Sara is acutely aware of the linguistic problems she still encounters when she speaks. Minor mistakes in the passage (e.g., when she uses the past tense of "to lose" instead of the present tense and chooses the singular expletive "there is" over the correct "there are") indicate slight syntactic confusion, and it is probably these few errors common to second language speakers that make her self-conscious. She has high expectations of herself which she reveals when she talks about her her Spanish accent being harsh, *"I don't want to speak 'cute' English. I want to speak good English."*

Even more frustrating to Sara is the fact that she believes herself to be a good writer, getting A's on all her papers in her English-taught graduate courses. However, she admits that she always has to get them edited. She claims that she is more conscious when she writes in English and that one task can take her a significant amount of time. Sadly she comments on her writing in English, "*Those little things, they will be there always. It's something that will never happen to me in Spanish.*" Those "little things," the minor semantic and syntactic errors, are ones that do not naturally sound right to her because she acquired them at such a late age. Unlike Sirena, who was immersed in the English language at a much younger age and was therefore able to acquire it more quickly, Sara had to overcome the self-consciousness of being an adult who is learning a second language, often impeding her oral and written expression of English.

English-Dominant Bilinguals

Cultural Identity Conflicts

English-dominant bilinguals are those that feel that their thoughts are generated for the most part in English. Eugenia and Elena both claim to think and dream in English. These women, both of Mexican descent, have spent the majority of their lives in the United States. Eugenia has lived all eighteen years of her life in the U.S. and Elena, who is now thirty years old, came to the U.S. at the age of four. Both are circumstantial bilinguals. Unlike Sirena and Sara who see a clear distinction between their two cultures, Eugenia and Elena have a much less clear division of the Mexican and American culture and the languages associated with them due to the early mixing of the two. Even though their first language is Spanish (since their parents only spoke Spanish to them), they experienced little difficulty when they began to learn English in school. Being so young prevented them from having the inhibitions older children and adults often have when they are acquiring a second language.

This early simultaneous exposure to both languages also made them more apt to mix the two languages, especially when speaking with their siblings. Although both of their parents are primarily monolingual Spanish speakers and actively discouraged them from mixing languages, the constant exposure to English and the influence of the American culture made inserting English words into their initiated Spanish conversations seemingly unavoidable. While their parents felt they could correct any mispronounced Spanish words, they could not prevent their children from speaking English if there simply were not an equivalent word or phrase in Spanish. Because Eugenia and Elena have lived in an English-speaking environment for most or all of their lives, their linguistic development of the predominant language, English, has overridden their first language, Spanish. Eugenia says,

> *I prefer to speak English. I feel stronger and more comfortable, but if I meet someone and they speak English but you can tell they're struggling because their native language is Spanish, I'll speak to them in Spanish. If they're having trouble, then I'd make it easier for them.*

These English-dominant bilinguals also have a much more vague sense of the line between what they considered to be part of their American culture and what they had learned from their exposure to the Hispanic culture. One of the major differences between the English-dominant bilinguals and the Spanish-dominant bilinguals is that the English-dominant group has had to learn about their Hispanic culture from their immediate family while the Spanish-dominant group has had more first-hand experience with the culture by spending a number of years in their country of origin. Having both grown-up in the U.S., these women explain how their identity has been influenced by a continual mixture of the two languages and cultures.

Eugenia, in particular, has found that this dual identity as Hispanic and American has been somewhat inharmonious. While

she has been raised with traditional Hispanic values, she often finds that they conflict with those of her friends.

> *A lot of my friends who are white don't understand why I am the way I am because of how I was raised. They had really liberal parents . . . no curfew . . . I have a curfew. They'll say, "God, Eugenia, why are you always cooking, always cleaning?" I don't really cook that much, but I try . . . My mom has these strong ideas that you have to learn how to cook and clean. She was raised to be able to take care of a family and her husband - satisfy her husband. As a matter of fact, my mother doesn't think I am Mexican enough. I'm lazy. I don't always want to learn how to cook. She tried to raise me the way she was raised with all of her values and beliefs.*

She claims that being the youngest in her family has helped since many of the rules that applied to her older siblings have been broken because the parents have become accustomed to the cultural conflicts. She says that she has been *"trying to force American views on them* (her parents)." While her older sister was not allowed to go to dances or spend the night at her girlfriends' houses, Eugenia feels that she has gotten a lot more freedom because she is the youngest and her parents have gone through the arguments so many times before. They have had to modify their value system so that their children could feel more American. For Eugenia, it has been difficult to respect the values of her Hispanic background while trying to acquire the values of the American culture. As Galvan (1986) explains, this bilingual/bilcultural individual is having to juggle not only her two systems of linguistic communication but more importantly her two systems of beliefs, values, and customs.

Eugenia's identity conflict has also been pronounced by the fact that she feels that she does not look Hispanic and therefore has experienced resistance from members of her own community. She claims that in high school many of the teachers did not know she was Hispanic until she started speaking Spanish. Since there were few Latinos in her high school, they tended to band together. She

remembers how people would yell at them for speaking Spanish with one another. *"We'd always get that comment 'You're in America now. Speak English.'"* However, Eugenia's strife in high school stemmed not so much from these incidents where she was being accused of speaking Spanish; rather, it was the times when because she did not dress or talk like the group of "Chicanos" at school that she felt her identity conflict the most.

Eugenia also finds that her preference to speak English affects her relationship with her family members in Mexico. She remembers how they used to get offended when she used English words because they thought she was trying to show off when in reality she simply did not know the proper word in Spanish.

While Eugenia seems focused on these incidents involving her identity conflict, Elena is much less vocal about any struggle she has experienced with her identity as a Mexican American. She mentions that she grew up in a neighborhood that was predominantly Mexican. Living in this community gave her a solid sense of her Hispanic identity even though she was still aware of her identity as an American since she spoke English at school. Yet, because there were other Mexican Americans in her elementary school and high school with whom she was friends, she felt the influence of both cultures and languages simultaneously. Indeed, even though she spoke Spanish at home, she says, *"It was pretty easy* (for me) *to learn it* (English)." In addition, there was not always a clear separation between the languages; she often spoke a mix of the two languages both at school and later on at home with her brothers and sisters. Thus, the distinction between linguistic and cultural communities did not become as much of an issue for Elena as it did for Eugenia. Elena seems to experience less conflict and discomfort with her dual identity.

Attitudes Towards Language-Mixing

Eugenia and Elena's attitude towards language-mixing was more positive than the Spanish-dominant participants in this study. Even though Elena was initially reminded by her older brothers and

sisters when they first came to the U.S. to not mix her English with her Spanish since they felt that knowing both languages would help them with employment in the future, a growing popular view (Sanchez, 1982), Elena's increased exposure to English and the American culture prevented this value from being maintained. Elena remembers,

> *When we first moved to the United States, my older brothers and sisters wanted to make sure we maintained our language and so at home we would only be able to speak Spanish - no English. When we spoke English, we got a* 'coco' *on the head. We would tease about it because you could say the Spanish* 'no' *or the English 'no,' and if we said the English 'no,' we got a* 'coco.'

Her comfort with mixing the two languages came as she and her siblings developed their English skills. In fact, they often found that language-mixing helped them if they did not want other people to understand what they were talking about. It is evident in the above excerpt that language-mixing for Elena is not an issue since she refers to a *"coco"* instead of "knock" on the head. Both Elena and Eugenia were raised in households where the parents did not speak English, so even though they became accustomed to speaking a mix of English and Spanish with their siblings, they still had to speak an unmixed version of Spanish to their parents and to outside members of the family. When asked about the two languages being spoken in the house, Eugenia responds,

> *It doesn't bother me at all. It bothers my mom. She says that it gets her nervous or something . . . like a massive crowd and they are all speaking English. It's like too many conversations going on at once and it's hard for her to pick it up. Yeah, but for me it's fine.*

Similarly, Elena's mother did not want her children to speak English around her since she could not understand it. She wanted to make sure that she could understand them in order to discipline them. However, she did feel it important for them to develop both their

English and Spanish skills. She would correct them every once in a while if they said something wrong in Spanish. Both women also have had bilingual friends in high school and college. They admit to code-switching particularly when they did not want anyone to know what they were saying. They claimed it gave them a sense of privacy, almost like having a secret language. Eugenia recounts an incident similar to many she had with her friends:

> *I'll say,* 'Esta muchacha alli esta . . .' *The person would answer in English but you'll be talking in Spanish. One person takes the English role and the other person takes the Spanish. Also, if they get stuck on a word in Spanish that they don't know . . . It always switches no matter how hard we try to stay with one language.*

Like Elena, Eugenia has no qualms about switching briefly into Spanish as she relates this anecdote. Language-mixing feels natural to her; in fact, she almost implies through her description that it is unavoidable when she is speaking to another bilingual.

Experience With Formal Education in the Two Languages

Unlike the participants who came as older children and adults, Eugenia and Elena's formal education focused primarily on their second language, English. Formal education in Spanish occurred only at the high school or college level and at that point so many of the syntactic structures of English had already been internalized, particularly in their written expression, that developing proper structures in Spanish was more taxing. These women found that their exposure to formal education in Spanish made them more conscious of their oral and written production of the language and they consequently became more self-conscious of their language abilities. Eugenia expresses her uncertainty:

> *I think I started noticing it more when I started taking Spanish in high school because that's when they really teach you how to speak correctly and so I was worried about . . . like when I*

> *speak to aunts and uncles, I'm always worried about if I'm speaking in "tú" or "usted" form, and it just messes me up even more because I'm concentrating too hard. If I just let it flow out and not think then it works better for me.*

Since her exposure to formal education in Spanish, Eugenia has become more sensitive to the subtle nuances of the language. Her teacher in high school had been educated in Spain, and even though she explained to the class that there were many ways to express similar meaning in different Spanish-speaking countries, Eugenia began to feel that the Spanish from Spain was the "correct" Spanish and what she spoke at home and to her friends was a more colloquial version of it. Like Sirena who also expressed some doubt about the "simple" Spanish she spoke with her family, Eugenia began to question her understanding of Spanish, especially since it already felt like her weaker language.

> *I was raised with two languages, but I don't think I could be a translator because Spanish words have double meanings. If I try to translate something, my friend will say it one way and I'll say it another.*

She remembers a situation when a friend was asking her and another bilingual friend of hers how to say something romantic, and they both attempted to translate "I want to kiss you." Eugenia said, *"Te quiero besar,"* and her friend said, "No. It's *'Tengo deseo de besarte.'*" Although both versions are acceptable, Eugenia claims that these minor confusions are the ones that have made her more self-conscious and less secure of her bilingualism. Even though she considers herself bilingual, she expresses doubt as to whether she could be an accurate translator because of her interpretations of the Spanish language.

Although Elena claims that she would feel confident about translating from English to Spanish in a job setting, she also agrees that her Spanish is weakening. She indicates that she had more contact with bilinguals in high school and in college since she tended to socialize with other Mexicans. She also took a couple of

conversational Spanish courses in college but claimed that even then she was having to go back to English when she would come to words she did not know or could not remember. Since college, her contact with the Spanish language has been only through her mother and her siblings. Attending law school while working simultaneously allowed few opportunities for her to practice her Spanish. She complains that the little exposure she now has to the language is not enough to keep her bilingualism strong.

Semantic and Syntactic Dissonance in Oral and Written Production of the Two Languages

Contrary to Spanish-dominant bilinguals, English-dominant bilinguals express over-consciousness when speaking and writing in Spanish. Eugenia experiences both semantic and syntactic dissonance when speaking and writing in Spanish. Like Sara who had a similar problem with her spoken English, Eugenia claims that minor structure problems arise frequently in her spoken Spanish. She describes the confusion she has with putting the preposition *"de"* ("of") into sentences that do not require it.

> *I always get yelled at for doing putting in "de." I can't remember how we do it in English. I know there are some sentences where you end with the word "of" and it sounds normal but in Spanish it is very wrong.*

It is evident that Eugenia is extending her grammatical knowledge of English to that of Spanish because these syntactic structures are cognitively stronger. Seliger (1988) noted that second language learners will often do this in order to create meaning. However, in Eugenia's case, she is applying her second language, English, to her first language, Spanish, because she has had more practice with and more exposure to the formalized structures of English.

Likewise, Elena also demonstrates a tendency to overextend her grammatical knowledge of English and allow its dominance to affect her utterances in Spanish. In two instances during the

translation exercise, she reconstructs some of the Spanish phrases to ones that seem more correct to her. Interestingly, the syntax of both sentences reflects an English structure. Instead of saying, *"No sé nada de nada de la chica esta,"* she would say, *"¿De donde viene esta muchacha?"* While the first sentence translates to "I don't know anything about that girl," Elena's version translates literally to "Where is that girl coming from?" - an American expression that would not necessarily have the same meaning in Spanish. Similarly, she changes *"¿Cómo te encuentra la vida?"* ("How's life treating you?") to *"¿Cómo te trata la vida?"* - a literal conversion of the English expression to a Spanish phrase that would be understood, especially in bilingual communities in the U.S. but would reflect to most Spanish speakers the influence of English.

In addition, Eugenia confesses that she also has a tendency to add Spanish grammatical structures to English words (e.g. *"parkear"* from "to park," the real word being *"estacionar"*), another phenomenon that frequently occurs in bilingual communities in the U.S. She says that even though the word is not real since it is a mix of both languages, she and her brothers and sisters use it so unconsciously that it has become an understood word in their family. Even her mother who only speaks Spanish is beginning to incorporate it into her everyday speech. Her mother might be accepting of this new vocabulary in part because she claims she knows the Spanish of thirty-five years ago and is not familiar with any of the new slang words. Even though "parkear" is an Americanized word that is not considered genuine Spanish slang, her mother seems to think that her Spanish is out-dated and so therefore does not feel the compulsion to prevent her children from introducing new terms.

Eugenia and Elena's semantic dissonance in their oral and written expression of Spanish again stems from the fact that their thoughts are generated in English. Elena claims that the only time she does not think first in English is when there is a Mexican concept, theme or even a feeling that she learned as a child that is hard to translate directly into English. She gives the example of someone being *"codo"* (or "cheap") and claims that it means more

than "cheap;" the term explains his entire personality. However, like Eugenia, she usually depends on her knowledge of English expressions to articulate her opinions. Eugenia describes how expressing herself in Spanish can be particularly difficult when she is in an state of emotional distress.

> *Usually if I'm mad at my mom, I have a hard time arguing in Spanish, so I'll start just yelling in English. I get really tongue-tied and frustrated. I can't argue in Spanish.*

Like Sara, the Spanish-dominant bilingual, who immediately felt lost when having to spontaneously generate a well-articulated passionate response in English, Eugenia complains of the same syndrome in Spanish. As soon as she needs to express herself emotionally, she falls back on her stronger language, English. Elena, too, demonstrates this same tendency when she discusses the difficulty she has when talking to her cousin in Mexico.

> *I would try to start in Spanish, but I was always reverting back to English because I would get too involved in my story and I would have to finish in English.*

Again, the more emotional Elena became as she continued her story and the faster her thoughts were generated, the less able she was able to find the equivalent expressions. Both Elena and Eugenia complain of similar difficulties when writing as well. Like Sara's difficulty in producing correct English forms quickly, Elena complains that writing in Spanish takes her a long time. She is probably experiencing the same phenomenon Eugenia describes, that of writing in Spanish as if she were writing in English. The self-consciousness of the transfer process impedes them both from producing text quickly. Not surprisingly, Eugenia contends that Spanish never leaks into her writing in English, whereas English often leaks into her writing in Spanish.

Impartial Bilinguals

Cultural Identity Conflicts

Two of my participants did not fall into either the Spanish-dominant category or the English-dominant category. Although both indicated that their written English was more fluent than their Spanish because of their formal education in an English-speaking country, these women felt that neither language was subordinate to the other. Unlike the other four participants who indicated clearly which language they felt more comfortable using when faced with a choice, Irene and Inma showed no preference. On the contrary, they both stated that they would let the interlocutor decide which language to speak depending on that person's level of discomfort with either language. What is unique about this pair of participants is that their age difference (Irene is forty-six and Inma is sixteen) does not seem to affect their view of themselves as impartial bilinguals. While they possess traits that resemble the participants of the other groups, they both have a very distinct relationship with Spanish and English. Irene has developed a formal sense of both languages and views them as separate and distinct; on the other hand, Inma has developed an informal sense of the languages and mixes them regularly. It is necessary to look at these women's backgrounds in order to realize how they have been able to experience similar comfort with both languages when their attitude towards them is so remarkably different.

Irene and Inma were raised in families whose attitudes towards the Hispanic and American culture affected the way they viewed their use of language. Like the Spanish-dominant participants, Irene came to the U.S. as an older child. However, unlike their negative experiences, Irene claims that having been educated some in English already when she lived in Mexico made acquiring English easy. Even as a thirteen-year-old she remembers having few problems with language acquisition. She notes that this might have been due to that fact that she did not have any Spanish-speaking friends during

her teenage years. She describes her upbringing during these first years in the U.S.:

> *There were many Mexican American children in school, but it was more a my own upbringing and my mother's perspective not to associate with Mexican Americans socially. My friends and my neighbors were not Latino. . . I think it is a very common attitude of other Latinos who are my generation - it is a very elitist perspective - the whole concept of 'wetbacks' and people who are from rural areas are really a different class and so it makes it a very class-oriented society.*

It is important to note that Irene's mother had married an American who did not speak Spanish so that the only interaction Irene had with her first language after coming to the U.S. was with her mother, her siblings, and relatives from Mexico. Due to her mother's class consciousness and the fact that Irene's stepfather was American, the family had very few friends who were Mexican. Consequently, Irene's cultural consciousness of her Mexican background was somewhat dormant during these years. Speaking Spanish only to select members of her family caused her to focus more on her acquisition of English and her assimilation to American culture. When she married an American who spoke a little Spanish, she found herself continuing to speak Spanish to her own children. However, when her oldest child came home from kindergarten one afternoon and complained that he felt different having a mother who spoke Spanish to him, she stopped. It was not until both her children were in high school when they took a trip to Spain that they decided that they wanted to begin communicating in Spanish again. Since then, she has spoken Spanish to them and has also become more focused on her Mexican heritage.

Inma's childhood experience (although she is Nicaraguan) is more analogous to the English-dominant participants. Like them, she grew up speaking both languages. She spoke Spanish at home to her parents and English at school to her friends, her teachers, and often her sisters. Unlike Irene who saw a clear separation between whom she spoke Spanish to and whom she spoke English to, Inma

often grew up mixing the languages. She says that when her mother speaks Spanish to her, she will often respond in English. Since her mother has some understanding of English, she allows her to do so. Contrary to Irene's upbringing that never advocated language-mixing in their select group of Spanish-speakers, Inma's family seems to have a much looser sense of how language can be used for communication. Even though her her interaction with her family is similar to that of the English-dominant bilinguals in this study, Inma's exposure to both languages seems to be more heavily concentrated. Since most of her extended family now resides in the U.S., they seem to show the common traits of the bilingual communities in this country. Most members feel comfortable speaking a mix of both languages, whether that means one person speaks Spanish and the other responds in English or they both code-switch intrasententially. There seems to be no clear separation between the two languages and indeed, they seem to form their own unique form of communication.

Attitude Towards Language-Mixing

Because these women's attitude towards language-mixing has also evolved contrastively, it seems ironic that they both still exhibit impartial bilingualism. Irene believes that her opposition to language-mixing has developed as a response to maintain the integrity of the Spanish language. Irene describes how mixing languages feels awkward to her and does not come naturally:

> *I am less comfortable mixing languages unless there is a really unique word, and sometimes there are those words, but it's very rarely that I will use that rather than express the meaning in English. That's just the way I am.*

She claims that out of all of her Latino friends, she is the person who least mixes the languages.

> *I don't know why that is. I tend to think that most of the people that I know did not spend a large part of their*

> *childhood in another country, or they were born here and are bilingual and therefore they have a greater ease of tossing languages. But for me, I came to the United States and I really did not have contact with Latinos until my late twenties and so, you know, I was speaking Spanish with my family or friends from Mexico."*

Now as she has come into contact with more Spanish-English bilinguals over the years she has become accustomed to hearing a mix of the two languages but never engages in it herself. She will speak only Spanish or only English depending on the situation.

> *I speak Spanish with all of my Latino friends who were born in a Spanish-speaking country. Those who are Chicano, for example, who were born here but don't feel as comfortable speaking Spanish with, I speak English.*

Again, she is stressing her ability to communicate in either langauge depending on the comfort level of the other speaker. As a professional, she claims that she and her colleagues (other psychiatrists and psychologists) who are Spanish speakers make a point of speaking only Spanish with one another in order to maintain cultural consciousness. To her, Spanish is not just the language of the home but it is also a formal mode of communication.

On the other hand, Inma has a completely different attitude towards language-mixing. When asked the same question about whether she ever switches back and forth between languages, even intrasententially, she responds without hesitation, *"Yes, I always do that."* Then she says, almost apologetically, *"I have a bad habit."* According to Kirschner and Stephens (1987), this is a reflection of how bilinguals have internalized society's negative attitude towards language-mixing. Inma sees her embarrassment as stemming from her father's concern that they keep both languages separate. *"He wants us to get used to speaking just one language, not mixing it in."* Yet, to Inma, it seems very natural to her and to her sisters to speak a mix of Spanish and English. She says that her decision to use one

language or the other often depends on what she is saying. When she is speaking to another bilingual in an English-speaking environment (e.g., school), she says, *"If it's something out in the open then I feel comfortable speaking English, but if it's something more private then I won't speak English, I'll speak Spanish."* Like the English-dominant bilinguals, Eugenia and Elena, Inma is using Spanish as her more secretive language. While Inma's division between her two languages is much more fluid than Irene's, she still seems to have a sense of which language is appropriate for a situation. However, Inma clearly does not see her Spanish as a formal mode of communication as Irene would but rather as a more private, informal language.

Experience With Formal Education in the Two Languages

In addition to their different attitudes towards langauge-mixing, Irene and Inma's experience with formal education has also had a significant effect on their linguistic development of both languages. Because Irene learned to read and write in her first language, Spanish, but also received education in English at an early age, she was able to internalize both systems. Although her higher education experience has been primarily in English, including a doctorate program in psychology, she uses her skills in Spanish frequently enough so that both systems are maintained.

However, because Inma was born and raised in the U.S., her experience with her first language, which was also Spanish, was primarily oral. She received formal education only in English until she began taking Spanish in high school. Yet, her initial experience with English in school was ironically similar to the trauma the Spanish-dominant bilingual, Sirena, endured. She remembers being taken aside at lunch everyday in second grade to be taught English as the other children played. She said that she could speak English, but she had trouble reading and writing. Yet, once she improved these skills in English, she decided to apply them to her Spanish. Since she had no formal teaching in Spanish, her attempts to write often mimicked the structures she had learned in English. When she

got to high school and tried to write in her Spanish class, she suddenly became worried that she was writing too informally. Like the English-dominant bilingual Eugenia, Inma became more self-conscious of her production of her first language when exposed to it in a more formal setting. Not surprisingly, she feels much more comfortable writing letters to her friends and family when informal language is more acceptable.

Semantic and syntactic dissonance in the oral and written production of the two languages

Because Irene has had so much practice in the oral and written processes of Spanish and English, she claims she has little difficulty expressing her ideas accurately and effectively in both languages. The only drawback she says she sometimes experiences is a slight influence of English structures over Spanish, particularly when she is writing. Since she received most of her higher education in English, her writing tends to reflect this training. This influence is especially evident when she writes articles for psychological journals in Spanish that require technical language. However, similar to Inma who feels more relaxed in situations where more informal writing is acceptable, Irene encounters less confusion when she is engaged in less formal writing tasks in Spanish (e.g., corresponding with friends and family).

Likewise, Inma claims that she has little trouble expressing herself in both languages. In fact, she says that her main problem seems to be mispronunciation of Spanish words since she claims that she taught herself to read Spanish after learning to read English in school. She describes how her parents usually correct her and tell her to look up the mispronounced word in a dictionary. Words that seem to be particularly problematic for her are ones that are very similar to the English equivalent. She gives the example "cheque" which means "check" but is not pronounced with such a hard "ch" as is said in English. Like Irene, she believes her written English to be stronger than her written Spanish. Because she has received all of her formal education in English, she finds that while

she often confuses the word order of her sentences in Spanish, she never confuses her structure when she writes in English. Yet, she claims that she often uses Spanish to help her develop better ideas in English. This phenomenon could stem from the fact that not only did she develop her thoughts in Spanish as a young child before she learned how to develop them in English, but she has also continued to use Spanish to express many of her ideas, particularly orally. Thus, she uses her oral expression of her first language to help her express similar meaning in the written expression of her second language. Inma is still engaging in what Seliger (1988) describes as "interlanguage," a system that is not based entirely on the first or the second language. He claims that this process requires a high level of decision-making on the part of the speaker which often causes confusion. Indeed, as Inma was completing the translation exercises, she was translating some of the words into English and inadvertently leaving others in Spanish so that, until she caught herself, her some of her translations reflected a mixture of the two languages.

Perhaps it is the difference in education or their opposing attitudes towards language-mixing that has promoted these two impartial bilinguals to develop a different relationship with their two languages. However, it is clear that Inma is experiencing more of a transfer problem than Irene because of her mixing. Again, during the translation exercise, she translates one of the sentences by giving two forms of it in English, one of which is improper. She says, *"No conozco a nadie . . .,"* could mean "I don't no anybody" or "I don't know nobody." To her, both forms are correct. The improper English form with the double negative is actually the literal translation of the Spanish version. She seems to be aware that she has a tendency to mix her systems but interprets it as informality.

Conclusions and Implications

Review of the Study

When I began this study, what I thought I was going to discover was how the Spanish-English bilingual communities here in the United States have been able to form their own linguistic community by combining the languages and creating a unique form of communication. The research that has been conducted thusfar has focused primarily on this phenomenon. Studies refer to the high incidence of code-switching that occurs among bilinguals, especially among Mexican-Americans who constitute the majority of Hispanics in the U.S. (Aguirre, 1978; Barker, 1975; et al.). However, what I found in my study of six bilingual speakers of Spanish and English was that not all of them felt comfortable code-switching. In fact, some were vehemently against it. What I assumed from past research in this area was that the problems Spanish-English bilinguals in the U.S. experienced in oral and written expression of both languages had largely to do with the fact that they were always in a constant state of mixing the languages. Yet, what I found instead was that even though all of the participants seemed to use one language to help them make meaning in another, it was not always expressed in genuine code-switching.

Through the interview process, it became apparent that these bilinguals' attitude towards code-switching was based on their upbringing. Those participants who came to the U.S. as older children or as adults saw a clear separation between the two languages and would not use them interchangeably. Yet, those who were either born in the U.S. or came as small children were less adverse to code-switching and in fact frequently engaged in it. As I analyzed the data from the interview and the translation exercises, three categories emerged: English-dominant, Spanish-dominant, and impartial. Based on two of Valdés' (1991) classification labels and one of my own, I felt that these categories best described these participants' bilingual status and linguistic orientation.

Limits of the Study

The fact that I chose a random selection of Spanish-English bilinguals from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds implies that there are many more factors that need to be analyzed before a general conclusion can be drawn about the connections Spanish-English bilinguals experience between their first and second languages. In addition, because I did not realize that as an elective bilingual who speaks Spanish as a second language my background would affect the design of this project, the way the study was conducted reflects my preference to speak my dominant language, English. This bias is evident in the translation data since some of the sentences I created reflect my experience with the Spanish language in Spain. Consequently, a number of the sentences were not examples of standard Spanish but rather a dialectal version of Castilian Spanish. This was particularly evident in sentences that were supposed to represent greater emphasis and repetition, an observation that was validated by Sara, the only Spaniard in the study. Therefore, instead of a direct analysis of the translation exercises, I made references to translations only to illustrate more general points in a section. The second part of the translation exercise on code-switching was not considered since fifty percent of my participants were not code-switchers.

Implications for Future Research

My study was an attempt to begin what Valdés (1991) raised as a valid point: the need for mainstream researchers to explore the language issues of bilingual minorities. The six participants in this study represent a sample of what Spanish-English bilinguals can experience in their struggle to overcome not only problems with linguistic transfer but also their difficulty with cultural identity. It is dangerous to see this group of bilinguals as one entity when in fact they represent the many nuances of the Hispanic culture as well as the many dialectal versions of the Spanish language. Each individual will have their own story to tell, and so it is imperative that we as

teachers and researchers invest more of our time to discovering how we can use these nuances to enrich the teaching of writing. As one of the larger populations of the U.S., we must learn more about the Spanish-speaking communities and encourage teachers to pursue their own bilingual abilities so that we can better relate to the difficulties these bilinguals face when approaching the writing process. I have attempted to show how the backgrounds of six Spanish-English bilinguals have affected their oral and written expression of both languages in the hopes that there will be a greater understanding of how these individuals balance their two systems of language, thought, and culture.

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Appendix A

Interview questions

1. How long have you lived in the United States?
   ¿Por cuánto tiempo ha estado usted en los EE.UU.?

2. At what age did you begin speaking English?
   ¿A qué edad empezó hablar inglés?

3. Do you consider yourself to be completely bilingual?
   ¿Piensa usted que es totalmente bilingüe?

4. What language do you usually speak with your parents? Are they bilingual?
   ¿Cuál idioma habla usted con sus padres generalmente?
   ¿Son bilingües ellos?

5. What has been your parents' experience with English?
   ¿Cómo ha sido la experiencia de sus padres con el inglés?

6. With whom do you usually speak English?
   ¿Con quién habla usted inglés generalmente?

7. With whom do you usually speak Spanish?
   ¿Con quién habla usted español generalmente?

8. To whom can you speak a mixture of both languages?
   ¿Con quién habla usted una mezcla de los dos?

9. Which language or mix of languages do you feel most comfortable speaking?
   ¿Cuál idioma o mezcla de idiomas es lo más cómodo para usted?

10. In what kind of situations do you feel most comfortable speaking English?
    ¿Para usted cuáles son las situaciónes más cómodos para hablar inglés?

11. In what kind of situations do you feel most comfortable speaking Spanish?

¿Para usted cuáles son las situaciónes más cómodos para hablar español?

12. Are there situations where you would feel uncomfortable if someone spoke to you in Spanish if you knew they could speak English? Why?
¿Resultarían situaciónes incómodos para usted si le hablara español sabiendo que ud. habla inglés? ¿ Por qué?

13. Have you ever wanted to express an idea that sounds better in Spanish than it does in English? Can you think of any examples?
¿Ha tenido ganas alguna vez de expresar una idea que suena mejor en español que inglés? ¿Hay un ejemplo?

14. Do you feel that you treat a person who speaks both Spanish and English differently than you would a person who only spoke English?
¿Le opina usted que le trate a una persona que sea bilingüe en una manera distinta que una persona que hable sólo inglés?

15. Is it easier for you to write in Spanish or English?
¿Le resulta mas fácil escribir el español o el ingles?

16. What problems do you encounter when you are writing in Spanish that you don't find you have when you are writing in English?
¿Cuáles problemas le encuentra al escribir el español que no surgen al escribir el inglés?

17. How do you distinguish between *tú* and *usted* (the informal and formal)?
¿Cuáles son las modalidades de tutear?

Appendix B

Translation exercise

Please translate the following Spanish sentences into English. Stay as closely as possible to the Spanish version.

1. ¡Que te lo pases bien!

2. Me doy cuenta que no tienes razón.

3. No sé nada de nada de la chica esta.

4. Venga, guapo. Te toca a ti. ¿No?

5. No conozco a ninguna persona de Guadalajara.

6. Se me rompió el vaso.

7. Me duele la cabeza.

8. Me caen bien las amigas de Tita.

9. ¿Cómo te encuentra la vida?

10. Tengo ganas de salir esta noche.

11. Querría mucho salir esta noche.

II. Which of the following sentences do you think you would say if you were speaking with another bilingual? (Read them aloud carefully.) Try to explain why one sounds more right than the other.

1)

a. Pero me dijiste that we were going to the movies.

b. Pero me dijiste que we were going to the movies.

2)

a. A mi no me gustan los champiñones. Tienen a funny taste.

b. A mi no me gustan los champiñones. Tienen un funny taste.

3)

a. Yo anduve en un state of shock for dos días.

b. Yo anduve in a state of shock por dos días.

4)

a. No voy a la casa de Enrique on Saturday. ¿Vas tú?

b. No voy to Enrique's house on sábado. ¿Vas tú?

Appendix C

Translation exercise

I. Please translate the following Spanish sentences into English. Stay as closely as possible to the Spanish version.

(Italic writing indicates the syntactic and semantic factors I will be focusing on in each section of sentences. I have also included the English translations. I will be paying close attention to their oral composing process as they switch from Spanish to English.)

Word order (indirect/direct object pronouns; verb switch; frequent use of reflexive verbs)

1. ¡Que te lo pases bien!
   (Hope you have a good time!)

2. Me doy cuenta que no tienes razón.
   (I realize that you are right.)

Emphasis through repetition/terms of endearment/double negative/position of possessive pronoun

3. No sé nada de nada de la chica esta.
   (I don't know anything at all about that girl.)

4. Venga, guapo. Te toca a tí. ¿No?
   (Com' on, handsome. It's your turn. Right?)

5. No conozco a ninguna persona de Guadalajara.
   (I don't know anyone from Guadalajara.)

Lack of possession/idea of fate as controlling an incident

6. Se me rompió el vaso.
   (I broke the glass.)

7. Me duele la cabeza.
   (I have a headache)

8. Me caen bien las amigas de Tita.

(I get along well with Tita's friends.)

9. ¿Cómo te encuentra la vida?
   (How does life find you?)

Verb variance when expressing a similar idea (tense change)

10. Tengo ganas de salir esta noche.
    (I really want to go out tonight.)

11. Querría mucho salir esta noche.
    (I would really like to go out tonight.)

II. Which of the following sentences do you think you would say if you were speaking with another bilingual? (Read them aloud carefully.) Try to explain why one sounds more right than the other.

Anticipated answers are underlined. Italic writing indicates my explanation.

1)

a. Pero me dijiste that we were going to the movies.

b. Pero me dijiste que we were going to the movies.
("dijiste que" cannot be broken; it introduces a complete clause)

2)

a. A mi no me gustan los champiñones. Tienen a funny taste.
(the English article "a" must precede the English noun)

b. A mi no me gustan los champiñones. Tienen un funny taste.

3)

a. Yo anduve en un state of shock for dos días.

b. Yo anduve in a state of shock por dos días.
(the English idiomatic expression "in a state of shock" cannot be broken; "por dos dias" is a period of time that requires the Spanish preposition "por")

4)

a. No voy a la casa de Enrique on Saturday. ¿Vas tú?
(the verb ir must be followed by the preposition "a";
the equivalent preposition of "on" would not precede the day
of the week in Spanish but rather the article "el" ("the"))

b. No voy to Enrique's house on sábado. ¿Vas tú?

Appendix D

Conceptual Framework : (based on Galvan's interpretation of a bilingual/bicultural student's two systems of language, thought, and culture (1986)).